FRONT LINE
P.O. BOX 21071
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20009

FIRST CLASS

Bulldozer
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Bancroft, Ont KOL 1CO
CANADA

Theses On Groucho Marxism

by Bob Black
The Last International

CAPITAL

ALKY: I'm wise! I'm wise!
GROUCHO: You're wise, eh? Well, what's the capital of Nebraska? What's the capital of the Chase National Bank? Give up?

1

Groucho Marxism, the theory of comedic revolution is much more than a blueprint for crass struggle: like a red light in a window, it illuminates humanity's inevitable destiny, the *declasse* society. G-Marxism is the theory of *permanent revelry*. (Down boy! There, that's a good dogma.)

2

The example of the Marx Brothers themselves shows the unity of Marxist theory and practice (for instance, when Groucho insults somebody while Harpo picks his pocket). Moreover, Marxism is dialectical (isn't Chico the classic dialect comedian?). Comedians who fail to synthesize theory and practice (to say nothing of those who fail to sin at all) are un-Marxist. Subsequent comedians, failing to grasp that separation is "the discrete charm of the bourgeoisie," have lapsed into mere pratfalls on the one hand, and mere prattle on the other.

3

Because G-Marxism is practical, its achievements can never be reduced to mere humor, entertainment, or even "art." (The aesthetes, after all, are less interested in the appreciation of art than in art that appreciates.) After a genuine Marxist sees a Marx Brothers movie, he tells himself: "If you think that was funny, take a look at your life!"

4

Contemporary G-Marxists must resolutely denounce the imitative, vulgar "Marxism" of the Three Stooges, Monty Python, and Bugs Bunny. Instead of vulgar Marxism, we must return to authentic *Marxist vulgarity*. Rectumfication is likewise in order for those deluded comrades who think "the correct line" is what the cop makes them walk when he pulls them over.

5

Class-conscious Marxists (that is, Marxists who are conscious that they have no class) must spurn the anemic, trendy, narcissistic "comedy" of comedic revisionists like Woody Allen and Jules Feiffer. Already the comedic revolution has superseded mere neurosis — it's ludic but not ludicrous, discriminating but not discriminatory, militant but not military, and adventurous but not adventurist. Marxists realize that today you have to look into a funhouse mirror to see the way you really are.

6

Although not entirely lacking in glimmers of Marxist insight, socialist (sur)realism must be distinguished from G-Marxism. It is true that Salvador Dali once gave Harpo a harp made out of barbed wire; however, there is no evidence that Harpo ever played it.

7

Above all, it is essential to renounce and revile all comedic sectarianism such as that of the equine Trots. As is well-known, Groucho repeatedly proposed sex but opposed sects. For Groucho, then, there was a difference between being a Trot and being hot to trot. Further, the Trot slogan "Wages for Horsework" smacks of reform, not revelry. Trot efforts to claim *A Day at the Races* and *Horsefeathers* for their tendency must be indignantly rejected; in truth, *National Velvet* is more their speed.

8

The burning issue confronting G-Marxists today is *the party question*, which — naive, reductionist "Marxists" to the contrary — is more than just "Why wasn't I invited?" That never stopped Groucho! Marxists need their own disciplined vanguard party, since they're rarely welcome at anybody else's.

9

Guided by the Marxist leader-dogmas of *misbehaviorism*, and *hysterical materialism*, inevitably the masses will embrace, not only G-Marxism, but also each other.

10

Groucho Marxism, then, is the *tour de farce* of comedy. As Harpo is reliably reported to have said:

"   "

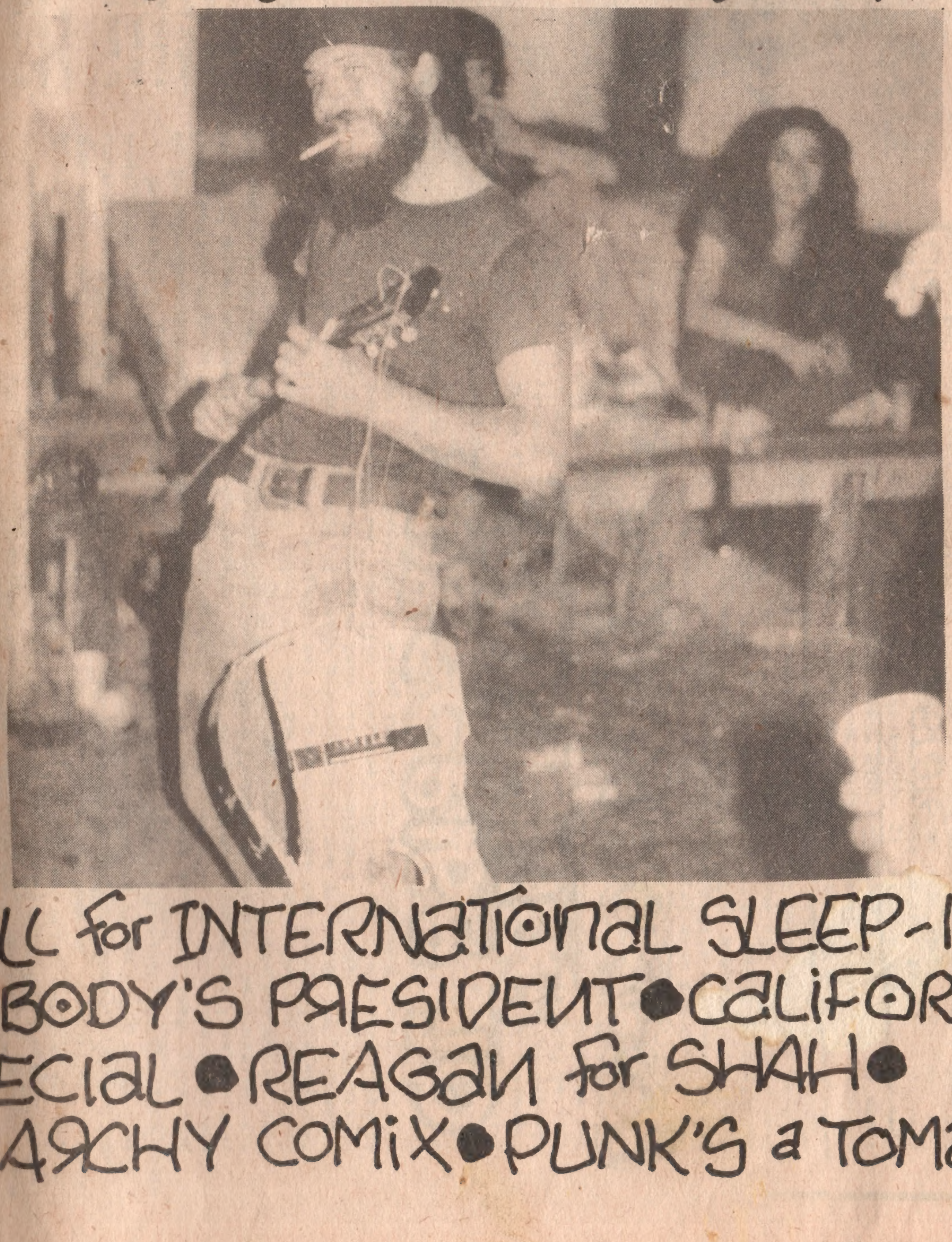
In other words, comedy is riotous or it is nothing! So much to do, so many to do it to! On your Marx, get set — go!

BORED AGAIN? Why not rattle your cage? I propose a dialog of the disaffected, a conspiracy of the equals, a politics of pleasure. Ours is the *comic power* of negative thinking and corrosive laughter. The unruly amongst the institutionalized have only themselves — and possibly each other. Let's confer. The choice is sedition or sedation. Any number can play. Write to 55 Sutter St. #487, San Francisco, California 94104.

FRONT Line

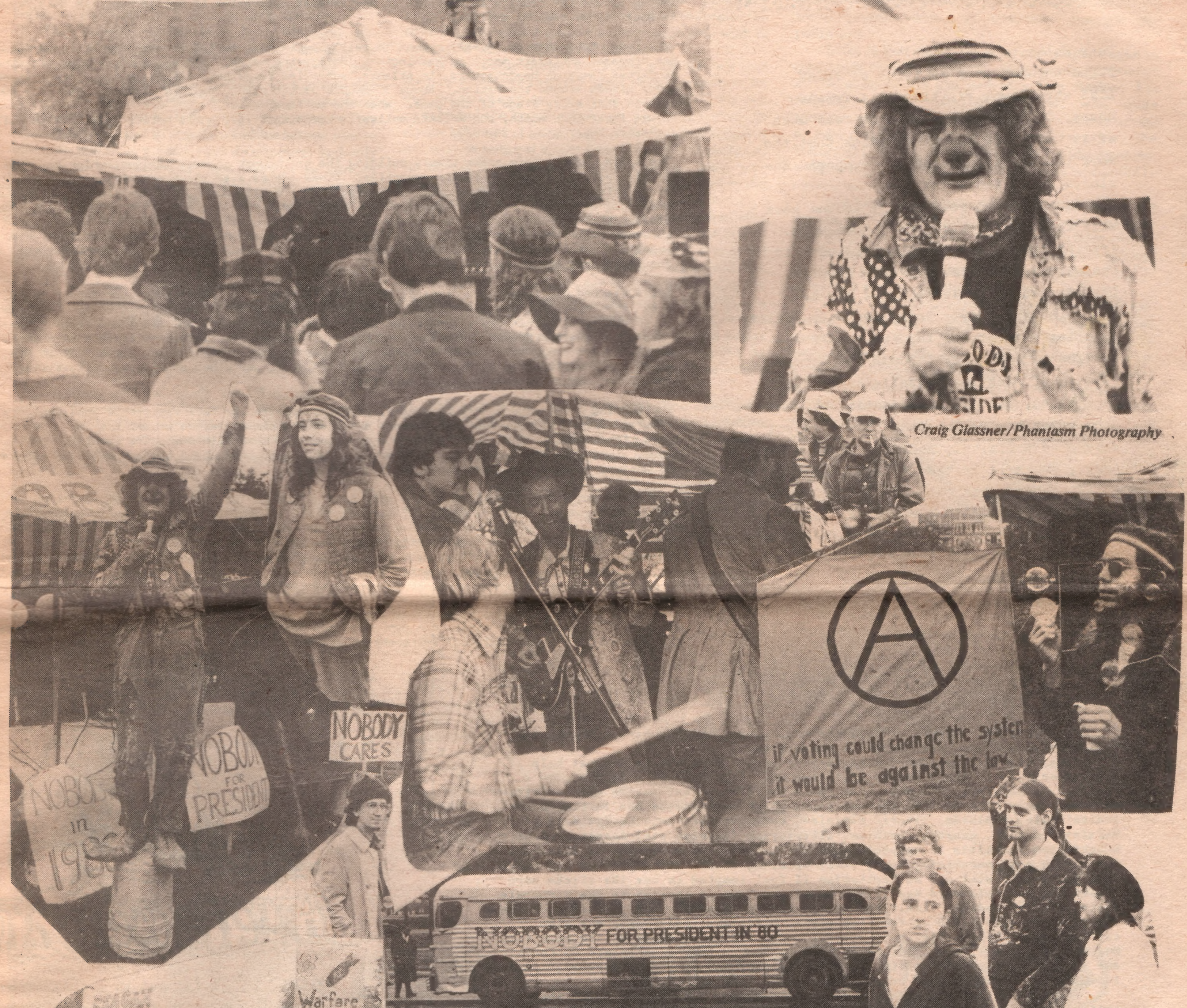
25¢

winter '80-'81 number 3 wash D.C.



CALL for INTERNATIONAL SLEEP-IN • NOBODY'S PRESIDENT • CALIFORNIA SPECIAL • REAGAN for SHAH • ANARCHY COMIX • PUNK'S a TOMATO

NOBODY IS PRESIDENT IN '80


NOBODY
NOBODY CARES
NOBODY FOR PRESIDENT
NOBODY in 1980
if voting could change the system it would be against the law
NOBODY FOR PRESIDENT IN 80

Craig Glassner/Phantasm Photography

REAGAN FOR SHAH
Warfare NOT Welfare
ALL POWER to the Corporation
I'M BACKING REAGAN
REAGAN FOR SHAH

CALL FOR INT'L SLEEP-IN

What will you be doing on January 19-2 1981 during Reagan's Inhoguration? Frankly we'd rather be sleeping and it will be cold outside. That's why we're calling for an international day of sleeping-in. It's easy to take part. You don't even have to come to DC. You can sleep-in wherever you are. It's that easy. However, if you want to join us, the Nobodys Fools Gang, Lemmings Against the Empire and Reagan for Shah Boosters will be hosting a mammoth SLEEP-IN to forget it all. Right now we're looking for the biggest, warmest space in DC. JOIN US.

Letters To Front Line

Dear Folks,

Paged through your #2 issue of FRONT LINE when I was visiting at a friends house. Didn't get a chance to read much of it but I saw enough to think that the work you are doing deserves support. Enclosed is $5 for a sub.

People have been really busy around here with draft resistence, anti-nuke work, freeing public transport, resistence to real estate speculation, rate strikes.

Its refreshing to see that we are not alone in our efforts to appropreate society I strive with others for the self-realization of community through the actualization of each individual's basic human capacities, and the satisfaction of genuine human needs. In doing this I reject alienated political, economic and personal power, and seek instead direct, practical relationships with people which mutually empower us to satify our everyday needs while allowing for the creative diversity amoung us.

In solidarity and cooperation,
Peter Galbraith
San Francisco

ANTIDRAFT ACTIVITIES IN GEORGIA

By Allen H. Greenfield

When President Carter announced his proposed "standby" draft registration program in 1980, very little was left of the antiwar movement which had been fairly substantial in Georgia during the Nixon years.

All that existed at the time of Carter's announcement were the bare bones of a fledgling CARD chapter, plus the antiwar nucleus which always exists within the framework of various marxist-leninist groups. But, by the end of the first draft registration period in late July and early August of 1980, a substantial new antiwar movement had come into being - at least in Atlanta, and, as a spin-off of various antiwar activities, local anarchists were moving, for the first time in Atlanta's history, towards forming a local alliance. How all this came about can be very instructive, because it represents the kind of grass roots organizing that has been going on around the country in response to the renewed militarism in Washington. In this respect Atlanta may be seen as typical.

The local CARD chapter, ACARD, seemed to really begin to come together in March, focusing on the proposed antidraft march on Washington. Before the march, however, a picket was organized at Carter campaign headquarters, in Atlanta, scheduled to coincide with similar pickets in other major cities around the nation. About 35 people participated, and the event was deemed a success in that early stage of the game. When the national march (which drew about 30,000) came around later that month, the Atlanta antiwar activists on very short notice were able to fill a charter bus.

The Spring months were spent simply building the groundwork of organization, which had been largely lost during the apathetic seventies. Other groups also began organizing in Atlanta along various lines, including Survival Summer, Peace Action Group, the Quakers and the National Resistance Committee, but ACARD remained the major focus in local antidraft organizing. There remained the hampering effect of a sense of unreality about the whole draft question; would the state really have the chutzpah to reinstitute registration so soon after Viet Nam? When it became obvious that the answer, unfortunately, was"Yes", ACARD began to make plans for the announced registration period.

ACARD elected not (ober some protest) to advocate open draft resistance, but rather chose to be supportive of those who decided to register "under protest" as well as those who chose not to register, within the framework of an overall opposition to the draft and registration. A draft hotline was put into service, and interested local activists participated in a draft counciling workshop with lawyers, former draft counselors, etc. A major demonstration was called for the first day of the first registration week, and other smaller activities were planned throughout the two weeks of registration.

Publicising the events didn't come easy, as there appeared to be a systematic (and possibly official) effort to pull down our posters and leaflets almost before we got them up. We countered with handbills and public service announcements. Meanwhile GANE, the local antinuclear group, along with ACARD and other interested groups, announced plans for a variety of antinuke and antiwar activities during Hiroshima-Nagasaki week.

The antidraft rally and picket at the main post office at the beginning of registration week was quite a success, drawing about 150 participants. In concert with similar activities the same day all over america, this appears to have been the largest day of antiwar activities since Viet Nam. Our other activities during the two week period were, for the most part, quite successful. The Nagasaki Day Rally, held in a public park in the local bohemian section, was also a significant success, drawing together a whole range of progressive groupings, and forming the nucleus of a broad antiwar coalition, for whatever lies ahead.

It should be noted in closing that local anarchists were among those in the forefront of all of these successful activities. One byproduct has been the formation of the Atlanta Anarchist Alliance (A^3), a broad coalition representing the whole range of anarchist thinking.

Dear Front Line,

Greetings from Siberia (Saskatchewan). Looks like you have a fairly well organized area down there. Many congradulations.

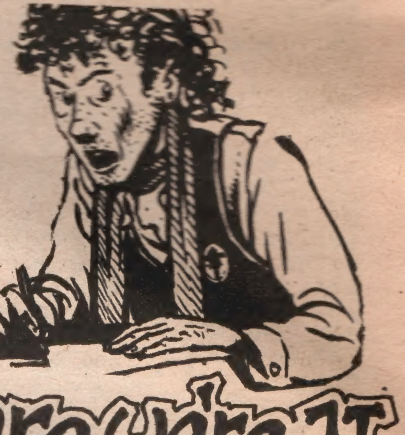
Regarding the feminism debate in your pages, it would be a great help if participants in it could define what they are talking about a little more precisely. Feminism, like anarchism, is a broad word that covers much territory and bears many sins as well as much good. Which feminism is one talking about - radical (sic) feminism, liberal feminism, conservative feminism (it exists!!), Marxist feminism, anarcha-feminism, libertarian feminism (the Association of Libertarian Feminists is supportive of the Libertarian Party and is therefore definitely not anarchist), etc., etc.? Opinions within this spectrum may range from the most brutal and authoritarian (I feel tempted to use the cliche word 'fascist', but this word has little meaning unless it applies to the corporate state) of the 'radical' feminists to the most progressive and practical of the socialist feminists and anarcha-feminists. Different individuals may also express ideas characteristic of several parts of the spectrum at the same time. One person may call for "individual freedom and the end of economic dependency due to sex" at one time and in 5 minutes turn around and use a perverted form of feminism to increase their own personal power over other people.

There is definitely a strain within the broad area of 'feminism' that is anti-sexuality and virulently anti-male. It does not comprise the majority of feminists in its most developed form, but it does exist. It is reinforced by a culture that sees such traditional actions and attitudes as romance, commitment, etc. as "outdated" or "against personal freedom". This type of feminism absorbs the attitude of confronting the world as a collection of enemies from the culture surrounding it. It defines half the human race as irredeemable enemies and attempts to disguise its hatred for the other half by an ideology of "sisterhood" that is so shrill as to be totally unbelieveable. If you have real friendship you don't need to make an ideology out of friendship.

In the end this type of feminism has as much hatred for other women as it has for men. The attitude of the 'liberated' woman to her 'unliberated' "sister" shows this time and again. Even worse, it encourages the grossest hypocrisy. It is literally impossible for the male and female animal to cease all "checking each other out". Sex suffuses all of our everyday dealings. Yet, when a certain type of feminism makes all of the traditional ways of 'civilizing' this interaction, of dealing with the opposite sex without continually hopping into bed, taboo, then the most uncontrolled methods of "scoring" arise out of the perversion of other facets of life. Everyone who has dealt with leftist groups knows exactly what I mean. How many times have you seen a man attempting to "get into a woman's pants" by talking about the evils of say 'sexism'. We don't need or want this type of hypocrisy.

Yet, once again this points to a 'failure' of feminism, to a point where it has been perverted by the surrounding culture, a culture of hypocrisy, selfishness and multi-level dealings with people. It is not a criticism of the essense of feminism and the good that it can bring. This point should be made plain, as plain as the exact type of feminism that one is speaking about.

In Solidarity,
George Benko
Saskatoon, Sask.



Where We're At

FRONT LINE is put out by a collection of folks. We are not an organization. Things just sometimes kinda happen. Initial money came from a now spent grant from the international anarchist conspiracy. Some of us subscribe to the last international and some to the last wave. Write us some stuff, send money, subscribe. Keep us ecstatic. We are a fraction of the whole. This is number 3, Winter 1980-81 Washington DC. Home of the homegrown Dictrict of Columbian. Scream on.

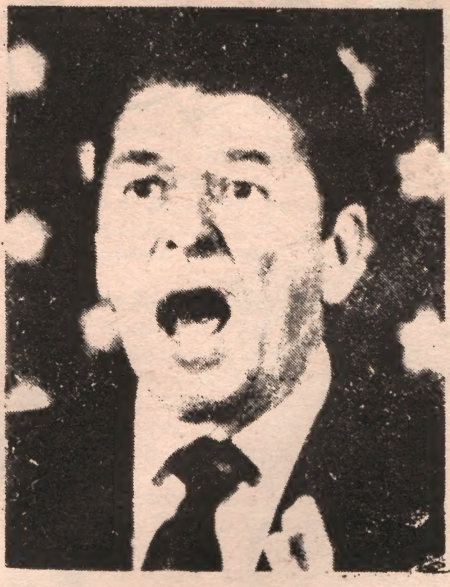
FRONT LINE, BOX 21071,
WASH D.C. 20009

photo: jamie mahoney

"I didn't burn money at the stock exchange to make money..."

Abbie Hoffman

Reagan For Shah?



WHY I'D RATHER BE SLEEPING

by Laslo Kovacs

Sure, everything's been done before it is true but somethings haven't been done in a while.

This is California Specials time and we thank our California contributers to this issue. This seems to us the best California has to offer that we've seen. Unfortunately (Maybe it'll be hilarious) Ronnie Reagan's coming to town to play his most memorable role. Maybe 20% of the American people voted for him or at least that's what the papers/tv tell us.

Will government under Reagan be more of an hallucination than usual? So now that DC is about to be Californicated we're calling for a little California dreaming. This is one of the reasons we're calling for an international SLEEP-IN during Reagan's Inhoguration. Most of the world will be asleep anyway.

Why an international SLEEP-IN? Well, why not, is how we all feel about it. Besides we want to do some dreaming together. We hope you all will join us or participate wherever you are by SLEEPING-IN January 20, 1981. When the SLEEP-IN is over some, if not all of us, will wake up.

We got a letter the other day:"Your publication is the most rampantly disgustingly anti-American piece of literary trash..." Well, gee it's not that we're anti-American anymore than anti-government. Nationalism is a disease spread by governments.

The women who recently blocked the Pentagon doors in a move for world peace got 30 day sentences, taken in chains on a 6 hour night-ride to West Virginia while further south the Nazis and Klan walk free out of the court room after murdering five anti-fascists. That's justice?

A couple of weeks ago a young man in Bisbee, Arizona was arrested and convicted for stealing a sandwich. The judge gave him a five year sentence. But wait a minute, no need to get upset. It seems the guy turned out to be what they call an habitual criminal. He stole a sandwich the other time he was hungry.

Election was a rainy day. Of course most of the American people are hip to what a sham the presidental elections are anyway. Most don't even vote because they know if voting could change the system it would be against the law. No matter who you vote for the government stays in power. The election becomes a truly anti-folk extravaganza produced by the corporate media. And they own these means of persuation to present an entertainment that offers an illusion of choice. Nobody knows the elections serve only to maintain things as they are nothing but a personality contest between a group of millionaries.

DEAR ABBIE, WE STILL HEAR YOU BUT...

You came back to DC, back to American University and played to a full house just as you did ten years back except this time it seemed like the majority of the students were there to look at you as an historical oddity. This sure weren't no sol darity rally.

You put the corporate media down real good but shit, it's the same fucko media that made you a "star" of the anti-war days. I'm glad you can draw a full house of bourgy college students because you need the money for legal costs and maybe you reached some of those students. Nobody knows for sure.

It was a drag, though, to hear this electorial politics garbage from you. Hey, Abbie, I wish some of these young anarchists would light a fire under you. Maybe as a teacher you have some things to learn about the 80's. Just because you're over 40 doesn't mean you gotta endorse the Citizen's Party and opt for a futile gesture, the vote for a tiny fringe party (200,000 votes) that can never be more than a distraction.

You're still an excellent performer. Shit, you might even become a politician and go for some votes. You got the chutzpah.

FE MALE:

The Woman's Column

by Eleanor Sheinbaum

First off, I would like to say that whatever predictions one may have made for the 1980 elections, I think the best man has won. Obviously, BECAUSE HE WON!! Noting the genuine 51% apathetic voter turnout which no doubt contributed generously to our new president's victory, it seems fair to say that the American public will indeed get what it deserves for the next few years. To some, it will make little difference, since they took neither the time nor the energy to participate in the process. To others, a minute few who nervously watch the skies as jet fighter planes practice maneuvers, the spectre of Strangelovian rationale looms ominously. Even others, those who favored the Republican vistory, will be happy conservatism has assumed the podium in our "liberally entrenched" society.

•

continued on page 10

REAGAN FOR SHAH?

American Journal

by David Armstrong
new indicator San Diego

Now that Ronald Reagan has confiscated the Presidency, some of his supporters are hoping that the former actor will forget the small stuff and go for the big enchilada: they want him to become America's first native-born Shah.

Shah? Sure. Why settle for duly elected constitutional authority when you can be deity of all the people? A President, after all must persuade; a Shah commands. A President serves only four to eight years; being Shah is forever. To err is Presidential (especially lately), being Shah means never having to say you're sorry.

A National Reagan for Shah Committee has formed, in hopes that a grassroots movement can persuade Reagan to seek the position for which he is best suited. I spoke on the phone recently with A. Tad Slick, a member of the Committee, and asked him why Ronald Reagan is qualified to be Shah.

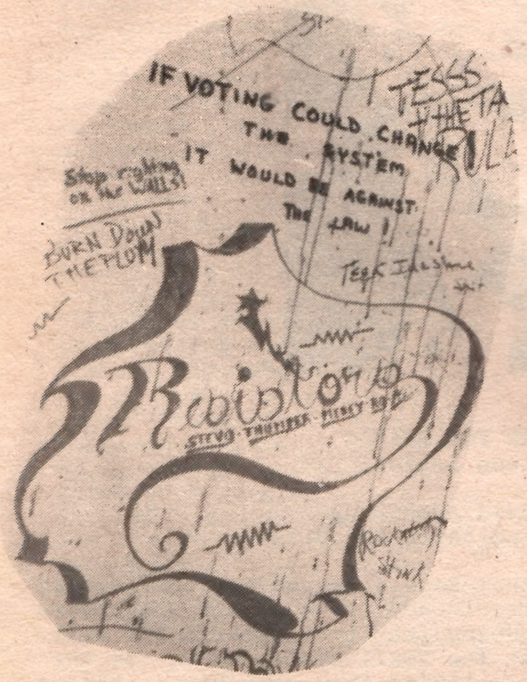
"Well," Slick replied, "he had a distinguished record as governor of California, he handled Bonzo okay and of course, he was host of Death Valley Days, which we think is highly appropriate. " Slick, who describes himself as an "image campaign consultant," allowed that Reagan has not yet declared for Shah, but he's keeping his options open. We think he privately endorses our idea."

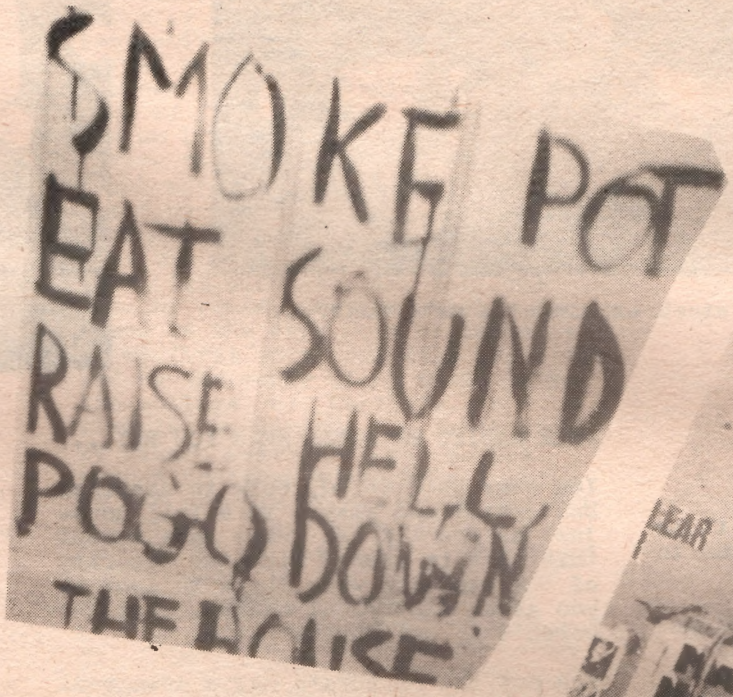
"There's a lot of support for this around the country," Slick said. "Our associate, Mrs. Betty Edsel, is circulating petions among the Joint Chiefs of Staff to get them in on the coup-- I mean the campaign. We think they'll be very receptive According to Slick, a number of other organizations have also decided that Reagan would make a fine Shah.

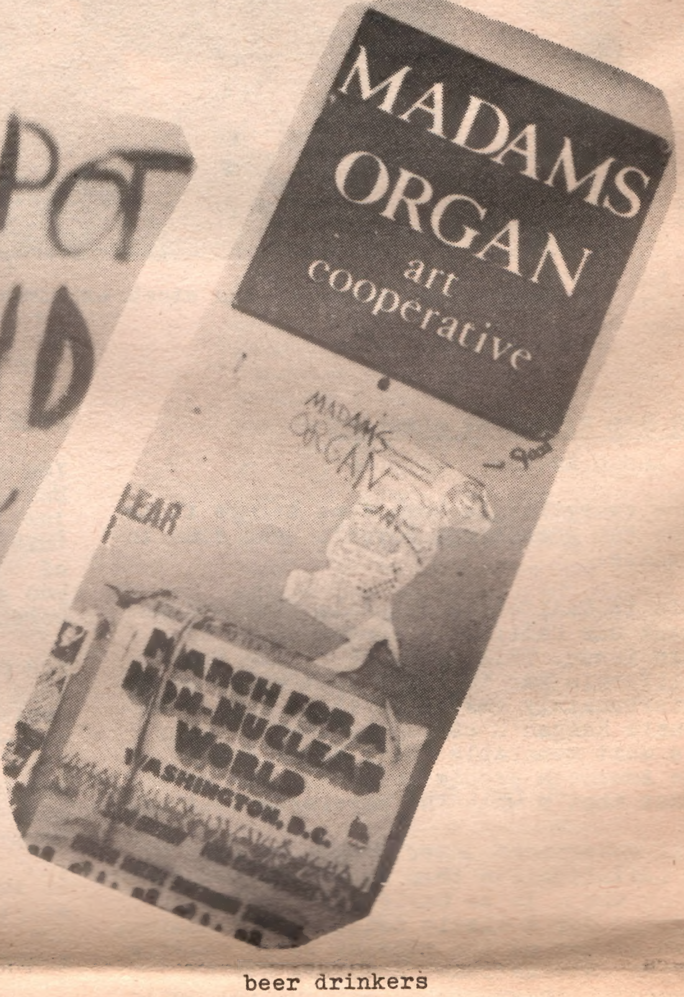
They include Students for War, the Future Dictators of America, Mutants for a Radioactive Environment, Another Mothers for World Domination, and Ladies Against Women, an anti-Equal Rights Amendment group. Other supporters include the Americans Against Civil Liberties Union and the National Association for the Advancement of Rich People.

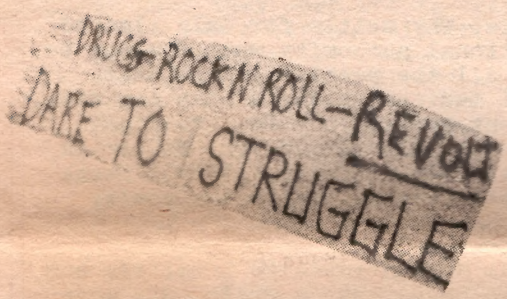
The Reagan for Shah Committee remains determined to bring a little touch of the Peacock Throne to the Oval Office, and they want your help. "We have a full supply of Reagan for Shah goods here at headquaters" 1600 Woolsey St. Box 7, Berkeley, CA 94703, said Slick. "And we're setting up branches and contacting affiliate groups around the country.

"PUNK'S A TOMATO, WE


IF VOTING COULD CHANGE THE SYSTEM IT WOULD BE AGAINST THE LAW!
TESSS THETA RULZ
Stop righting on the walls!
BURN DOWN THE PLUM
Raincoats
STEVO · THUMPER · MERCY BOB

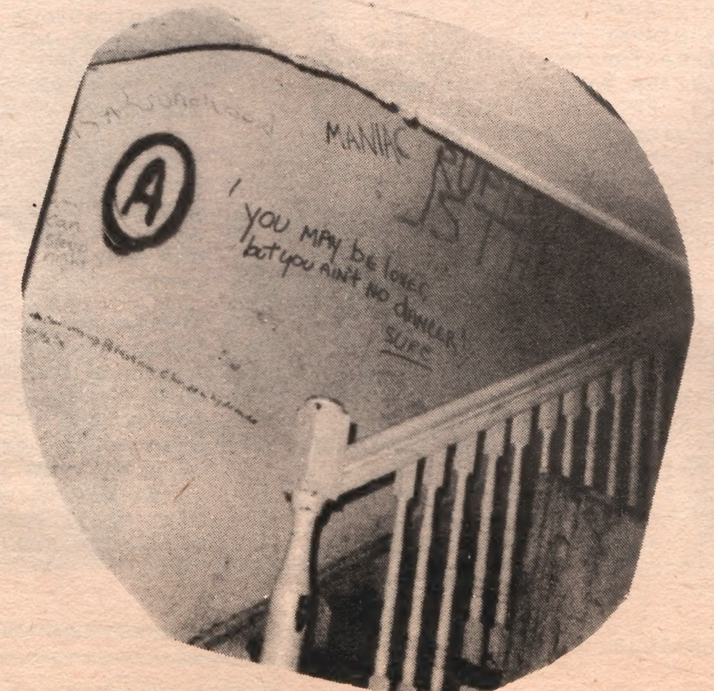

SMOKE POT
EAT SOUND
RAISE HELL
POGO DOWN
THE HOUSE


MADAMS ORGAN art cooperative
MADAMS ORGAN
MARCH FOR A NON-NUCLEAR WORLD
WASHINGTON, D.C.


DRUGS-ROCK N ROLL-REVOLT
DARE TO STRUGGLE

WITH RED HAIR
REV

barefoot native americans
lost & found
the lost
the found out
the not so found
those onto oblivion
the laid off
the employed
the looking for work
the welfare cases
the unemployed
maniacs
new waves
the laid back
last wavers
college students
young republicans
hi skool studunts
revolutionary communists
trots
maoists
acid heads
last internationalists
punks
janitors
radical publishers
leather girls
geeks
rumors
leather boys
pie man himself
easy riders
hippy dinosaurs
gypsy cab drivers
veterans
congo drummers


MANIAC
YOU MAY be lover but you ain't no dancer!
SUE

beer drinkers
grass tokers
pogo dancers
coca-cola drinkers
abstainers
weirdo wacko anarchist nut bars
astrologers
speeders
tarot spooks
1980
black men
brown women
bleached blonds
spanish speaking gentlemen
journalists
cab drivers
autonomists
harp players
provos
desk clerks
finger painters
bleeders
joint rollers
sparkers
re-assemblers
readers
transients
re-hab people
rip off artists
the disengaged
second story men
anarcho-boots
neo-nazis
jewel thieves
gun runners
aspiring assasins
mortar girls
academics
pipe bombers

LEFT IT ON THE WALL

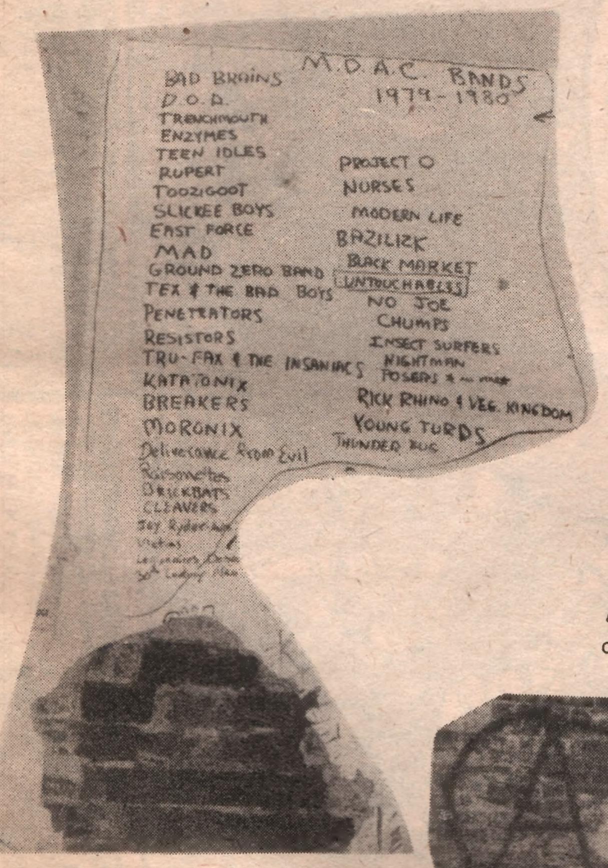

M.D.A.C. BANDS
1979-1980
BAD BRAINS
D.O.A.
TRENCHMOUTH
ENZYMES
TEEN IDLES
RUPERT
TOOZIGOOT
SLICKEE BOYS
EAST FORCE
MAD
GROUND ZERO BAND
TEX & THE BAD BOYS
PENETRATORS
RESISTORS
TRU-FAX & THE INSANIACS
KATATONIX
BREAKERS
MORONIX
Deliverance From Evil
CLEAVERS
PROJECT O
NURSES
MODERN LIFE
BAZILIZK
BLACK MARKET
UNTOUCHABLES
NO JOE
CHUMPS
INSECT SURFERS
NIGHTMAN
POSERS
RICK RHINO & VEG. KINGDOM
YOUNG TURDS
THUNDER BUG

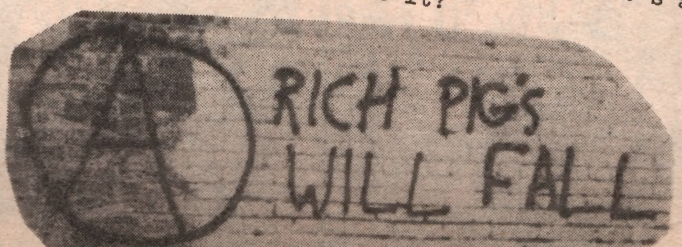
photo: bill jordan

The Decline and Fall of Madam's Organ

by Nytebyrd Howl

The last party of Madam's Organ was a real bash, a piano was smashed to smitherines, boxes of hypo needles were thrown from a third story window on party goers below, more holes got poked in walls, an old hag attacked a young punk, and rivers of beer flowed through the dirty drunken crowd. And so ended the final chapter in a saga of endless chaos. Spilling out onto the sullen streets below were a tattered mob of anarcho-punks, ragged crows, neighborhood dogs and bare bottom street urchins. The cops prowled nervously up and down 18th street and the colored girls just rolled their eyes. It's all over now, or is it?

PUNK ROCK
Killed ME


RICH PIG'S
WILL FALL

PUNK ROCK KILLED ME

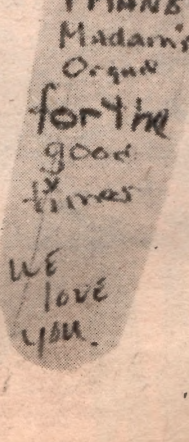
by Doctor Mutant

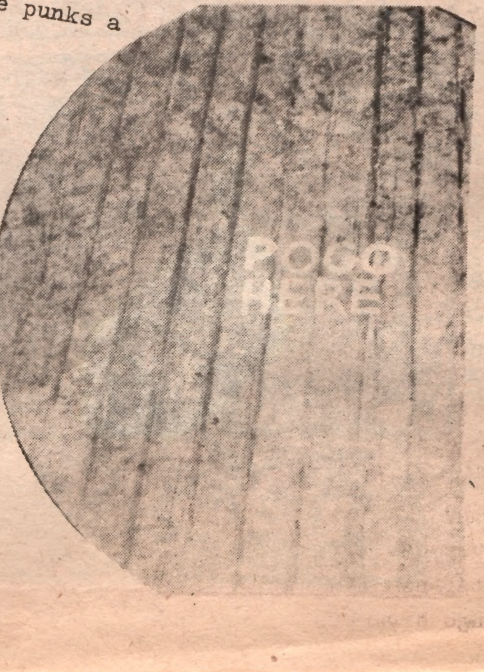
This is the night of the big Beach Brain Blowout. Everyone is lei'd at the door by attractive doorwomen. Upstairs, a Pacific like deep blue and green bathed stage, punctuated by screams of blood red and television strobe. Downstairs, a second stage has been erected at the far end of the bar, where some fifty odd cases of beer are cooling on eighty pounds of ice.

This is the night of six bands, including Bad Brains, Insect Surfers, Tru Fax & Insaniacs, Enzymes, Ozone Music and the Posers. The music will rotate between the basement and main stage, although many find the atmosphere in the back yard, dressing room, bathroom or front sidewalk more their speed. By the time a hundred and fifty people had arrived, spray paint had been distributed and was covering everything including the temporary walls which had already succombed to drunkards.

Well, I'm pleased to report that when the dust settled, only one fan had been hospitalized (slashed arms from a fall) and all the musicians had some extra change and the punks a full evening.

potters
soft sculpturers
social architects
photographers
lady sax players
mothers & sons
fathers & daughters
sometime plumbers
anarchists
film makers
painters
day laborers
machinists
cabinet makers
sound people
dry wallers
electricians
writers
wood workers
plasterers
wheel chair people
men with bandaged heads
exotic dancers
organists
yippies
co-ordinators
clerks
managers
grass dealers
bong freex
x yippies
hot wire kids
student revolutionaries
linguists
booking agents
the would be
the has been
the never were
night cooks
singers
guitar players
diplomats
collectors
would be terrorists
informers
snorters
one eye patchers
local stumblers
retired ambitions
band followers
groupies
sixties diggers
feminists
the disabled
ultra terrestrials
time travelers
good humor men
people from the future
people from the past
disco refugees
beep beep men
stray dogs
rover
brother
rats
fruit flies
mumblers
mice asleep in syrup
dark room people
phone crankers
girl with lost kitten
spider legs
snake lips
the checkered demon
contradictions
egg lobbers
pukers
computer programers
roofers
mstics
contractors
buddahists
mercenaries
cops
carpenters
narcs
traveling ladies
rastas
refugees
protestors
downer freex
mechanics
bikers
critics
waitresses
dope dealers
heiresses
truck drivers
deliquents
drop outs
local drunks
off duty messengers
artists
nyte byrds
glue heads
musicians
scatologists
fat bag men
graffiti theorists
wall pissers
winos
pregnant teen agers
doctor mutant
posers
run aways


Thanks
Madam's
Organ
for the
good
times
WE
love
you.



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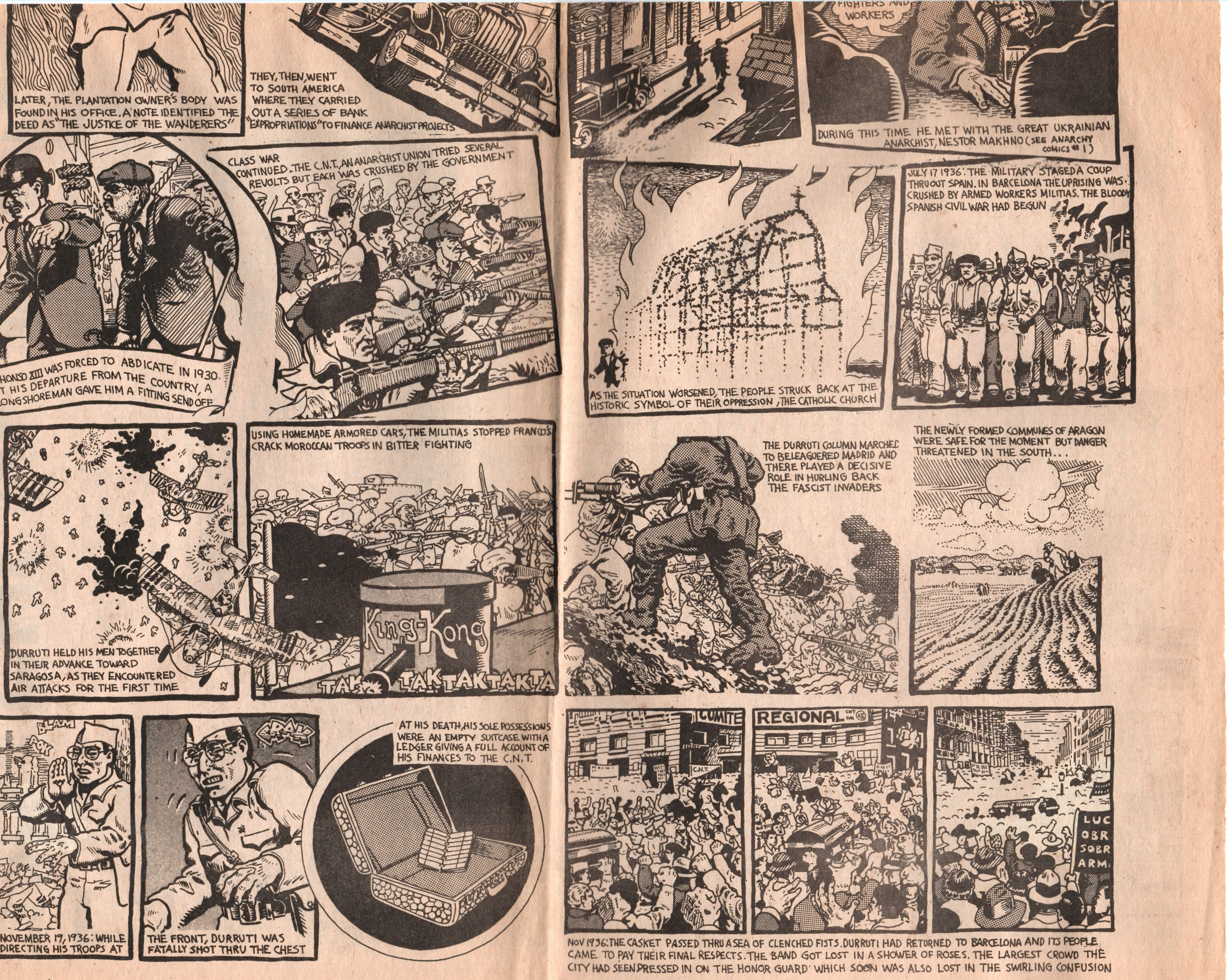
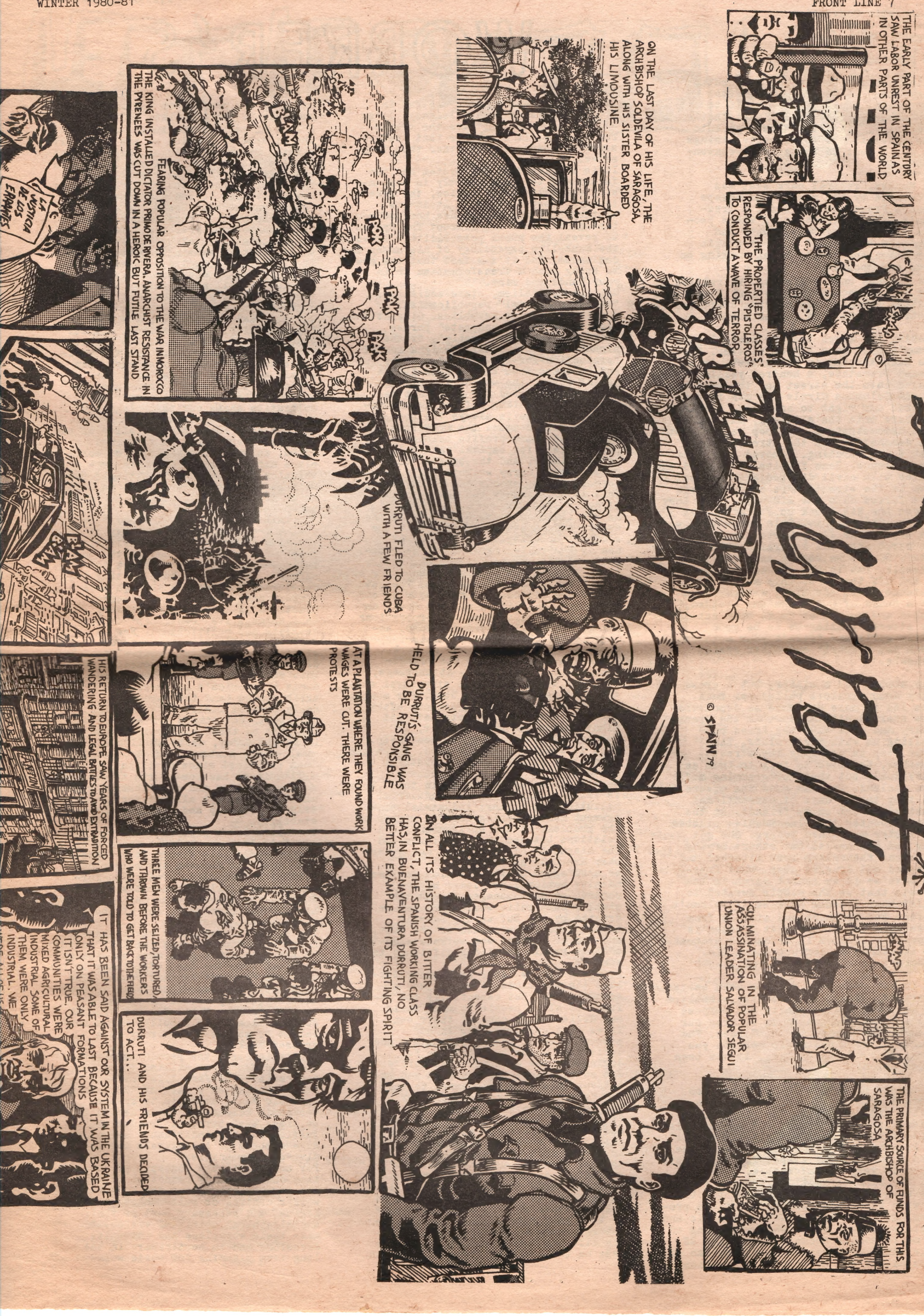

LATER, THE PLANTATION OWNER'S BODY WAS FOUND IN HIS OFFICE. A NOTE IDENTIFIED THE DEED AS "THE JUSTICE OF THE WANDERERS"
THEY, THEN, WENT TO SOUTH AMERICA WHERE THEY CARRIED OUT A SERIES OF BANK "EXPROPRIATIONS" TO FINANCE ANARCHIST PROJECTS
FIGHTERS AND WORKERS
DURING THIS TIME HE MET WITH THE GREAT UKRAINIAN ANARCHIST, NESTOR MAKHNO (SEE ANARCHY COMICS #1)
ALPHONSO XIII WAS FORCED TO ABDICATE IN 1930. AT HIS DEPARTURE FROM THE COUNTRY, A LONGSHOREMAN GAVE HIM A FITTING SEND OFF
CLASS WAR CONTINUED. THE C.N.T., AN ANARCHIST UNION TRIED SEVERAL REVOLTS BUT EACH WAS CRUSHED BY THE GOVERNMENT
AS THE SITUATION WORSENED, THE PEOPLE STRUCK BACK AT THE HISTORIC SYMBOL OF THEIR OPPRESSION, THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
JULY 17 1936: THE MILITARY STAGED A COUP THRUOUT SPAIN. IN BARCELONA THE UPRISING WAS CRUSHED BY ARMED WORKERS MILITIAS. THE BLOODY SPANISH CIVIL WAR HAD BEGUN
DURRUTI HELD HIS MEN TOGETHER IN THEIR ADVANCE TOWARD SARAGOSA, AS THEY ENCOUNTERED AIR ATTACKS FOR THE FIRST TIME
USING HOMEMADE ARMORED CARS, THE MILITIAS STOPPED FRANCO'S CRACK MOROCCAN TROOPS IN BITTER FIGHTING
King-Kong
TAK TAKTAKTAKTA
THE DURRUTI COLUMN MARCHED TO BELEAGUERED MADRID AND THERE PLAYED A DECISIVE ROLE IN HURLING BACK THE FASCIST INVADERS
THE NEWLY FORMED COMMUNES OF ARAGON WERE SAFE FOR THE MOMENT BUT DANGER THREATENED IN THE SOUTH...
BLAM
POK
NOVEMBER 19, 1936: WHILE DIRECTING HIS TROOPS AT
CRACK
THE FRONT, DURRUTI WAS FATALLY SHOT THRU THE CHEST
AT HIS DEATH, HIS SOLE POSSESSIONS WERE AN EMPTY SUITCASE WITH A LEDGER GIVING A FULL ACCOUNT OF HIS FINANCES TO THE C.N.T.
COMITE
C.N.T.
REGIONAL
LUC OBR SOBR ARM
NOV 1936: THE CASKET PASSED THRU A SEA OF CLENCHED FISTS. DURRUTI HAD RETURNED TO BARCELONA AND ITS PEOPLE CAME TO PAY THEIR FINAL RESPECTS. THE BAND GOT LOST IN A SHOWER OF ROSES. THE LARGEST CROWD THE CITY HAD SEEN PRESSED IN ON THE HONOR GUARD WHICH SOON WAS ALSO LOST IN THE SWIRLING CONFUSION


THE EARLY PART OF THE CENTURY SAW LABOR UNREST IN SPAIN AS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD
THE PROPERTIED CLASSES RESPONDED BY HIRING "PISTOLEROS" TO CONDUCT A WAVE OF TERROR.
Durruti
© SPAIN '79
CULMINATING IN THE ASSASSINATION OF POPULAR UNION LEADER SALVADOR SEGUI
THE PRIMARY SOURCE OF FUNDS FOR THIS WAS THE ARCHBISHOP OF SARAGOSA
ON THE LAST DAY OF HIS LIFE, THE ARCHBISHOP SOLDEVILA OF SARAGOSA, ALONG WITH HIS SISTER BOARDED HIS LIMOUSINE
CRASH
DURRUTI'S GANG WAS HELD TO BE RESPONSIBLE
IN ALL ITS HISTORY OF BITTER CONFLICT, THE SPANISH WORKING CLASS HAS, IN BUENAVENTURA DURRUTI, NO BETTER EXAMPLE OF ITS FIGHTING SPIRIT
FEARING POPULAR OPPOSITION TO THE WAR IN MOROCCO THE KING INSTALLED DICTATOR PRIMO DE RIVERA. ANARCHIST RESISTANCE IN THE PYRENEES WAS CUT DOWN IN A HEROIC BUT FUTILE LAST STAND
BLAM
POK
POK
POK
DURRUTI FLED TO CUBA WITH A FEW FRIENDS
BLAM
AT A PLANTATION WHERE THEY FOUND WORK WAGES WERE CUT. THERE WERE PROTESTS
THREE MEN WERE SEIZED, TORTURED AND THROWN BEFORE THE WORKERS WHO WERE TOLD TO GET BACK TO THE FIELD
DURRUTI AND HIS FRIENDS DECIDED TO ACT...
LA JUSTICIA DE LOS ERRANTES
HIS RETURN TO EUROPE SAW YEARS OF FORCED WANDERING AND LEGAL BATTLES TO AVOID EXTRADITION
IT HAS BEEN SAID AGAINST OUR SYSTEM IN THE UKRAINE THAT IT WAS ABLE TO LAST BECAUSE IT WAS BASED ONLY ON PEASANT FORMATIONS IT ISN'T TRUE. OUR COMMUNITIES WERE MIXED AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIAL SOME OF THEM WERE ONLY INDUSTRIAL. WE

Democratic Convention
New York City
August 1980

by Caroline

This year I attended the Democratic Convention in New York. They (the democrats) would not let me in to see how democratic it really was. That's democracy. Since I couldn't go into the convention I found better things to do. I went to the counter-convention.

On Monday, central park west was liberated by the people and Sheeps Meadow Freestate was born. A freestate is a liberated zone where people live and are free. Tents and tepees were pitched in a strategic formation and people began working on food and secutity.

The day was only beginning. We rallied at the Harlem recruiting station. There were soulful speakers against the draft and registration and good raggae music.

Leading the march back to central park was Jimmy's head on a silver platter. There was much dancing in the street. As we passed Freestate, a hundred yelling Yips roared into the street and the heat was on. At Columbus Circle the men in blue revoked our right to assembly, forcing marchers onto the sidewalk, turning us into demonstrators. One cop said I could not demonstrate in the street. I said that I was marching. I moved away from his violence. Some Yippies confronted the police with civil disobedience and sat down in the street. More demonstrators were forced onto the sidewalk. Then they forced the RAR truck up 7th avenue at 30 mph. This was it. This was war. Now the truck, the Jimmy Carter head and the march were all seperated from each other. So now we ran up and down the sidewalk, ran in the street, and jumped on and off the curb. This action of resistance (curb stepping) extremely upset a hoard of 8-10 pigs who prodded, pushed and pulled at us to stay out of the street, telling us to be good little girls and "didn't your mothers teach you respect" and other sexist comments.

They almost had a sister, but a crowd of angry demonstrators pulled her back. This led to more defiance as demonstrators started sitting down in the crosswalks. And more blue men tried controlling us with their clubs. They would stop us crossing the streets together. We tried to talk to them as individuals but their programming made them violent. The Man gave the orders and they take 3 days of conventional frustration out on my friends. At the next encounter the blue meanies clubbed the sister mentioned before. She got away and has healed but others trying to defend themselves were attacked and arrested and dragged away. What freedom have we if we cannot march in the streets that we the people sweated to build? What freedom have we if we can't protect our brothers and sisters from those swinging clubs. What freedom is democratic freedom if we cannot protest its existence as corrupt and a lie. Democracy is no freedom at all.

All is not over yet. We have been beaten, seperated, arrested, assaulted, insulted and outraged but our unity and purpose have not been forgotten as we drag our tired bodies onward to the Garden. The thought of rest and music carries you onward to your destination. It has been a long march.

Now before me as I walk up to Madison Square Garden and the US Post Office, reality hits me again. The police have captured the post office steps. There is no place to sit down and all the people are in pens on the sidewalk between the sound truck and the steps. This made lots of people very uncomfortable. I could feel the fire of emotions. No one feels safe when totally surrounded by the blue men with their weapons and merciless programming. So we listened to the music and people spoke out about what was going on and media hounds focused on burning US flags while we screamed on at the can of worms called the Democratic convention.

WORKER'S

It's a myth that central control in production makes for efficiency. It's a lie that Mussolini made the trains run on time. It's another that "public servants" serve anyone other than themselves.

It is a trism that The System has two faces: one to speak sweetly in persuasion and self-justification, the other to say: "Obey or else:" It is now history that anarchists are here to see through the sham and disrupt The System to reveal the human possibilities beneath the mask-like psychology of hierarchy and dominance. And it's a fact that the power to bring such a transformation is in your hands and mine.

Call it capitalism, state socialism, "representational" republicanism, or a union of soviet republics. Give it the dignity of the technocrats' phrase "mixed-economy partnership", or the highminded (but sleazy) designation of "production-for-the-people"- in the end it comes down to the same little can of worms: the worker is only a worker (unprepared for important decisions or handling difficult information), the boss is always the boss (the one who must command the mysteries of management), the profits belong to the priviledged, for capital cash rules over capital labor, and the base of the pyramid must carry weight, while the topmost fatass steals the pretty view. This is not fantasy but the substance of daily struggle.

As our lives are manipulated while the owners and managers work and milk the economy, bringing us in and out of neatly controlled recessions, depressions, slumps and market rushes, we learn that life will never change for us unless we change it ourselves. The newspapers are filled with the facts of our existence, the little ups and downs as we remain the plaything of corporations and governments: U.S. Steel Corp. announces the closing of 16 factories, throwing 13,000 people out of work. Jones & Laughlin closes its Youngstown, Ohio, steel plant. At Ambridge, Pa., the world's largest structural steel fabricating plant shuts down. For months now GM has been closing factory after factory. Chrysler, an international giant controlled from Detroit, is collapsing even with government help. Ford is feeling none too good. It is the same story in many other industrial sectors.

We all agree: productivity in the U.S. is falling; inflation and industrial pollution are rising; industrial management cares nothing for the worker or the problems of the environment; and relations between the work force and the hierarchy of management and ownership are bad- as always.

We also agree on the solution to these massive national problems: worker control or self-management and the stable, democratic world that can be created by it. But we are heavily locked into the mistakes of the past, and worker control and workplace democracy remain solutions difficult to achieve.

It looks like a labor problem or perhaps (in the minds of many) just an economic one. But essentially the refusal to allow people to make their own decisions or control their own lives is a cultural one. In our present mode of making judgements and decisions- where the struggle for dominance, the worship of authority, are so constant- the managers and executives have been programmed to take the "short view", to scramble for what appears to be a gain.

It is often said that modern society has chosen efficiency in production rather than richness in working life. In actual fact, society makes no choices as such, and the countless individual decisions out of which have come mass production as efficient as that at Ford or GM and jobs as dull as those at Ford or GM have most of them been made without the slightest reference to the quality of working life that would result. These are made on the basis of figures of output and cost and profit for the immediate business in the immediate future.

A lack of concern for human worth and the biosphere of which we are a part is a chief characteristic of corporate capitalism. At Harvard Business School, in "Ruthlessness 101", they still teach that control and a theory of efficiency are everything... and damn the long-range consquences. Screw the worker and screw the public, thus demonstrating your manhood and your right to a place in the jungle hierarchy! It is a mentality that is seemingly rational, but it is in fact prompted by great ignorance and highly neurotic motives: as if the future will never exist, as if the results of one's actions will never come home to roost.

Our personal geography is composed of the community, the workplace, and our kinship relations with fellow humans. Each overlaps the other, but the workplace dominates our lives. Even when we are away from the factory, the office or the fields it continues to control. Its qualities, temper and coloration shape our psychology and our cultural responses and decisions. Our children learn the mentality of the workplace very early in life- and often, as well, the violence of workplace exploitation. The social revolution that anarchists struggle for will be made in the workplace as much as in the community, for the two are inseparable.

Capitalism as we know it today (the chain-of-command, the love-envy of the king figure, the sacredness of profit for ownership) may be too fully wedged into its mind-set to survive. It has been busy cutting its own throat for decades through anti-worker, anti-community, anti-earth practices in large-scale industry (and through its "ownership" of governments and politicians). Now we find that capitalist concepts of efficiency and central control are disrupting basic food production. We know about the chemical-laden products of America's large-scale agribusiness (and the rampaging, newly created insect life that has resulted), but others are now being sold on these diastrous ideas.

In Europe today, where skillfull small-scale husbandry of the land has been practiced since civilization began, agribusiness has come forth to destroy food production and distribution systems which have always allowed for community self-sufficiency and economic and social stability.

Socialism has a problem with true worker control, because while it appears to be a good democratic theory it prompts a real conflict between the worker and central bureaucracy. Production-for-the-people easily degenerates into production-for-the-state as decided by technicians and commissars out of abstract world market practices.

The socialist mentality can't shake its harsh conditioning from the last century of struggle: this mess must be straightened out from the top, efficiency is the key, the "future" is what counts. The scientific managers (and final decision-makers) quickly become an elite. The careerists from Mobil Oil and General Foods will slip as happily into a socialist or soviet bureaucracy as a greased monkey.

Capitalism sees the person as "Private/Economic Man", one willing to trade away much of his/her life for wage payments. Socialism's view of "Social/Economic Man", attempts to create "economic community" while asking that we trade away personal freedom and justice for the individual- and often huge numbers of individuals and individual communities.

For anarchists the concepts of justice and community cannot be exchanged one for the other, and the concept of worker control or self-management is a logical and necessary part of their social/ethical/spiritual vision. To make basic workplace and community decisions and to participate in the long-term planning for one's work-

CONTROL

place are essential to the anarchist demand for a truly free, ecologically-sane society.

Anarchism is not an ideology as that term is commonly used. and it is not an "ism" in the usual sense. It is instead a body of basic principles, of practical ethical tools for helping humankind achieve the freedom which is its birthright.

Giovanni Baldelli, a scholar and anarchist activist since the 1930's, outlines these principles in his classic work Social Anarchism, Aldine-Atherton, recently made available in an English translation. He sees five fundamental principles as necessary to make anarchism work: (1.) The Human Person Is Primary-- the individual alone is a seat of consciousness; (2.) Human Life Is Sacred-- The human alone creates his/her own values, his/her own rational and affective attachments, and his/her own motives for action; (3) Coercion Must Be Rejected-- coercion, whether by society or individual, runs counter to the needs and purposes of the individual and is therefore evil; (4.) The End Does Not Justify The Means-- the tree is known by its fruit but the so-called ends of political organization and movements seem never to manage to ripen; and (5.) Double Standards Are Unacceptable-- belonging to one society or section of society or gender rather than another is mainly an accident of birth, and a truly moral standard abstracts from such accidents. No one is to be disqualified as a human being by the label "enemy".

There are two anarchist methods or "battle-plans" for making worker control successful: (1.) the direct action of creating relatively self-sufficient, worker-owned, decentralized business-and-community outlets for manufacture, retail sales, services or agriculture; and (2.) the anarcho-syndicalist model of community-based federated labor unions. If both the community unit for service or commerce and the community-based labor/syndicalist group are properly informed by the anarchist principles laid down by Baldelli, there will develop within the workplace certain precise conditions, as a new culture of cooperation and awareness of the results of one's action unfolds.

Workers will find that the need for leaders (and followers) has disappeared. Persons of all ages and skills-- including non-working children and the very elderly somehow related to the workgroup-- will begin to see the connection between the products of the outlet and the conditions of community and the outside world. There will develop a healthy new interest in the nature of group concensus on all decisions and practices, and thus an increasing awareness of the richness of human character and experience. The workplace becomes not only a place of labor but also a center for creativity, education and political activism. The choice to produce for and serve the local market will naturally follow the increasing awareness of community needs, thus a greater integration of the anarchist unit with the general region will be achieved.

Down on the level of the nitty-gritty (who will clean the toilets and collect the garbage?) problems which plague other societies and create harsh class/caste divisions will not exist because all persons will share both pleasant and unpleasant tasks, both physical and techical labors. (There is no reason for an executive vice president at General Motors to not take his/her turn cleaning toilets. In fact, there may be no reason for a GM executive vice president at all)

The nitty-gritty of syndicalism also has an edge on general labor union practices. Anarcho-syndicalists usually belong to two groups within a single syndicate: one being a workplace affinity group and secondly a community-based group, creating a very special kind of double-focus representation in the syndicate itself as well as in the larger federation of syndicates. For the anarchist no additional organization or "governing body" is necessary; even short-term and long-term economic and land-use planning decisions can be made by the community and clusters of communities.

There practices have worked well in history. Far too well to please the power-mongers! Anarchist communities and federations have had to be destroyed by armed force to make them not work. The Paris Commune of 1871, where anarchists built a functioning egalitarian society was ended only by mass executions. In Russia, the Kronstadt worker councils and Nestor Makhno's Ukrainian army and communes (a complete libertarian nation of farms, villages and towns) were suppressed by full-scale military action. In 1919, the Bavarian free-republic established by German anarchists and socialists was destroyed by systematic slaughter. The free communes and factories of anarchist Spain, embracing all aspects of agriculture and industry, were exterminated initially by their communist "allies" in the Republic and then Franco's armies and police. Even in New Jersey, the Chilton anarchist colony following the teachings of Francisco Ferrer was broken up by the U.S. Army at the beginning of WW II because of supposed "subversive" potential.

The struggle for true workplace democracy is being carried forward actively in several countries. Experiments of varying type and quality exist today in Sweden, West Germany, Yugoslavia and Isreal and a strong anarchist presence is established in the labor movement in Norway, Germany, Italy, France and Spain. The potential to make true workplace democracy a lasting reality is probably best demonstrated at this time by the success achieved since 1941 in the Spanish town of Mondragon. In this Basque community of 30,000 there now exists 70 interlocking producer co-operatives, owned and managed by their 14,000 workers. This remarkable effort was started by a Basque priest who founded a community technical school. Twenty-three of its students, wanting to apply what they had learned in the ideal community democracy of the school raised the funds within Mondragon to begin a small cooperative unit producing inexpensive stoves and cooking equipment. Today the town has 60 worker-owned industrial plants, six cooperative schools (with 3,500 students), five agricultural coops, a consumer coop, a restoration and development center, a welfare agency and a bank. Annual sales for Mondragon run $600 million.

Anarchism is first concerned with social justice as it evolves from the consciousness of the self-actualized individual. Only secondly is the concern economic justice (injustice and oppression are compatible with any economic so far devised). Economic justice will arise from the creation of the ethical community itself. Antipower is the tool, anti-power creates the ethical "capital" which is the substance of community. Put your faith in no party, politician or government to bring about the society in which you wish to live. The ability to create such a world lies only with you.

by MINGO

> "Don't ever put your fate and the solution of your problems in the hands of political professionals and don't allow leaders to appear among you. Both will betray you and you won't escape from your situation as slaves. You will start to be free when you are capable of conducting your struggle yourselves."
>
> -Buenaventura Durruti

LIVING IN BABYLON by Zonker

"I take my dreams for reality because
I believe in the reality of my dreams"

-painted on the walls of Paris

Reality is what you make it and no other social truth is more significant throughout history and for our time. Things happen through the efforts of individuals, or the non-effort. History is made by people who live out their dreams. That, in essence, is how change comes about.

Unfortunately most people don't believe their dreams. Instead they believe in the reality shaped by their environment. They live out the nightmare vision of the ruling forces in our society. Too rational to dream, they've created the illusion that change is impossible, or a pain in the ass. Most people live their lives in comfortable apathy. They accept all that is. Their dreams and hopes have been shoved to a remote corner of their brain. So what the hell is reality anyhow?

It's the common perception of most people. People who exist in a reality shaped by the establishment instutions. (schools, church, police, the state) Institutions that are real because you believe they are. Well, they're not real. They are the products of the ideas of a group of people. Those who run the whole show. The world has become their movie and freedom is their greatest enemy.

The answer lies in you and me. Freedom is yours for the taking. Live it? Freedom is the right to choose between two actions or a number of actions without interferance. Harmful actions are not the result of freedom. One person can't be free unless everybody else is free. None of us is free but freedom is there. You have to grab it and hold on tight. What if nobody went to school? Schools would become a non-reality. What if nobody votes? The government, the police, the army might become an un-reality.

This paper doesn't necessarily advocate these actions (I do) but think about it.

There's more to the picture than meets the eye. You have to raise a little hell to lower heaven.

ACF Conference
Morgantown West Virginia
July 1980

by Chris

The ACF (Anarchist Communist Federation) has been around about two years now and has been publishing its bi-monthly paper, The North American Anarchist, for about a year. This continent-wide federation of Anarchist groups grew out of tendency within the SRAF (Social Revolutionary Anarchist Federation) which has been for ten years now serving as a communication facility for anarchists.

We made it out to the 6th conference on the afternoon of what turned out to be the last day of the get together. Probably more people would have come if the Rainbow Gathering and the Smoke-In weren't going on at the same time. When we got there a couple discussions were going on: one on security, nicknamed 'paranoia' outside and another inside on eastern Europe, particularly the worker's struggle in Poland.

About thirty women, men were there and everybody was real friendly and we had a good meal and talked and laughed and looked at the scenery. Then folks got down to serious business. I agreed with the ACF declaration that was adopted but was too sleepy to stay up until very late/early as the debate on the organizational question went on and on.

I personally take heart, though in the recent, anarchist-flavored workers' summit in Poland. Mother Russia threatens an occupation for the workers' convocation; it will make Her look imposing, though, and I think She will probably opt for patience and a calm attitude, as has been the case at least outwardly so far. Hawkishly surveying the situation from his armchair, our new president is itching to assume office while publicly declining to make statements on foreign policy before his term officially begins. The Workers' Summit in Poland reflects what one would hope to be a global movement: the world's citizens denoucing their leadership for inability to maintain peace without constant threat of war. One would like to think that this action in Poland was precipitated by the great bravery of the Iranian people in demanding Shah Rhesus Pavhali abdicate. Though not as lowly in origin as former Philadelphia tire salesman, Anastasio Somoza of Nicaragua, who also abdicated in a peoples' coup, the Shah of Iran, the Russian Bear and our own American politicians reflect the foolish wisdom of peacokery for whatever reason. Ironically, the name of the Shah's Empire was "The Peacock Throne". As the American public has been lured to believe the oil wells of Iran belong to America, so have they been led to believe there was a certain historical precedent for The Peacock Throne when all it really proved was that sheep of a majority will flock together in ignorance. When concern awakens and mother and father look at their families and their future under threat of nuclear disaster and/or war under our present brinkmanshit political leaders, a united front of concerned citizens becomes a positive reality as in the case of Iran, Nicaragua and now Poland. The fearlessness of the common cause unites all who would rather NOT be king. I think it's beautiful.

Recently here in Washington a coalition of women's groups held an action at the Pentagon.

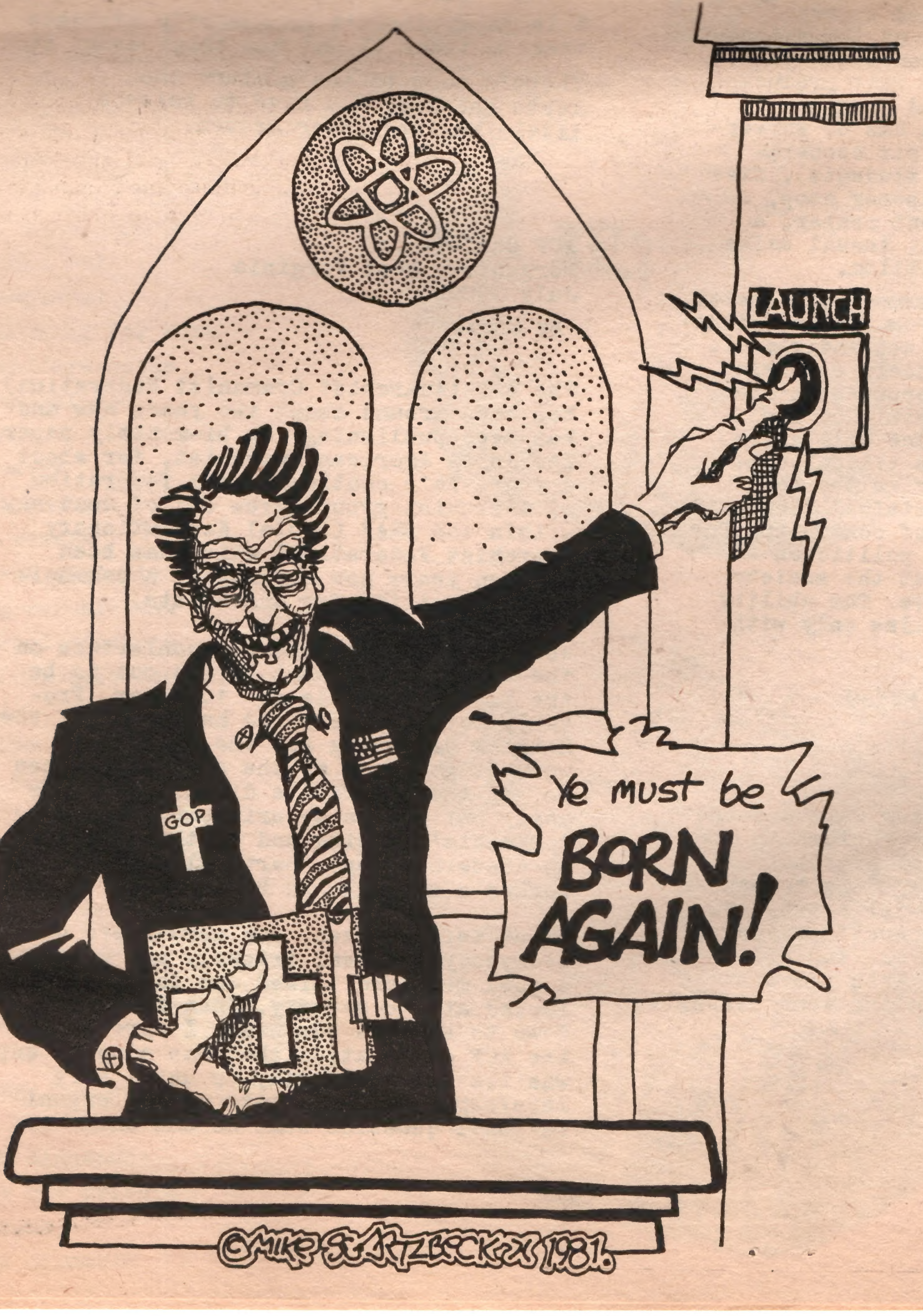
The Pentagon action was one of the most successful demonstrations I have seen here in Washington in quite some time. Although the action itself was marred by a certain pacifist restraint when actually at the Pentagon, the jubilant spirits of thousands of concerned women infected local residents. As a candlelight procession of five thousand women made its way up 18th Street, N.W., the night before the Pentagon occupation, many local movement people were moved to tears by the sight once again of thousands of people in town to protest the insanity of war. And a beautiful sight it was, too, the singing women carrying candles for peace in the dark. It reminded me of my first spiritual walk for peace, led by the monks of my small Catholic college, St. Martin's, in Olympia, Washington. A small group of campus peace movement people made a procession and held a vigil on the grounds of the State Capitol building. There were perhaps a hundred of us there and I was proud to be among the few. Later on in D.C. the massive numbers of war protestors I encountered at anti-war rallies gave me hope that soon all people would see the light. I think enthusiasm for the sport greatly diminished with the deaths at Kent State. Let us hope the rational approach of the Women's Action will have better success than the reckless abandon of youth. Besides, what chauvinist in his reich mind would hit a woman IN PUBLIC!! Plenty, I guess, huh?

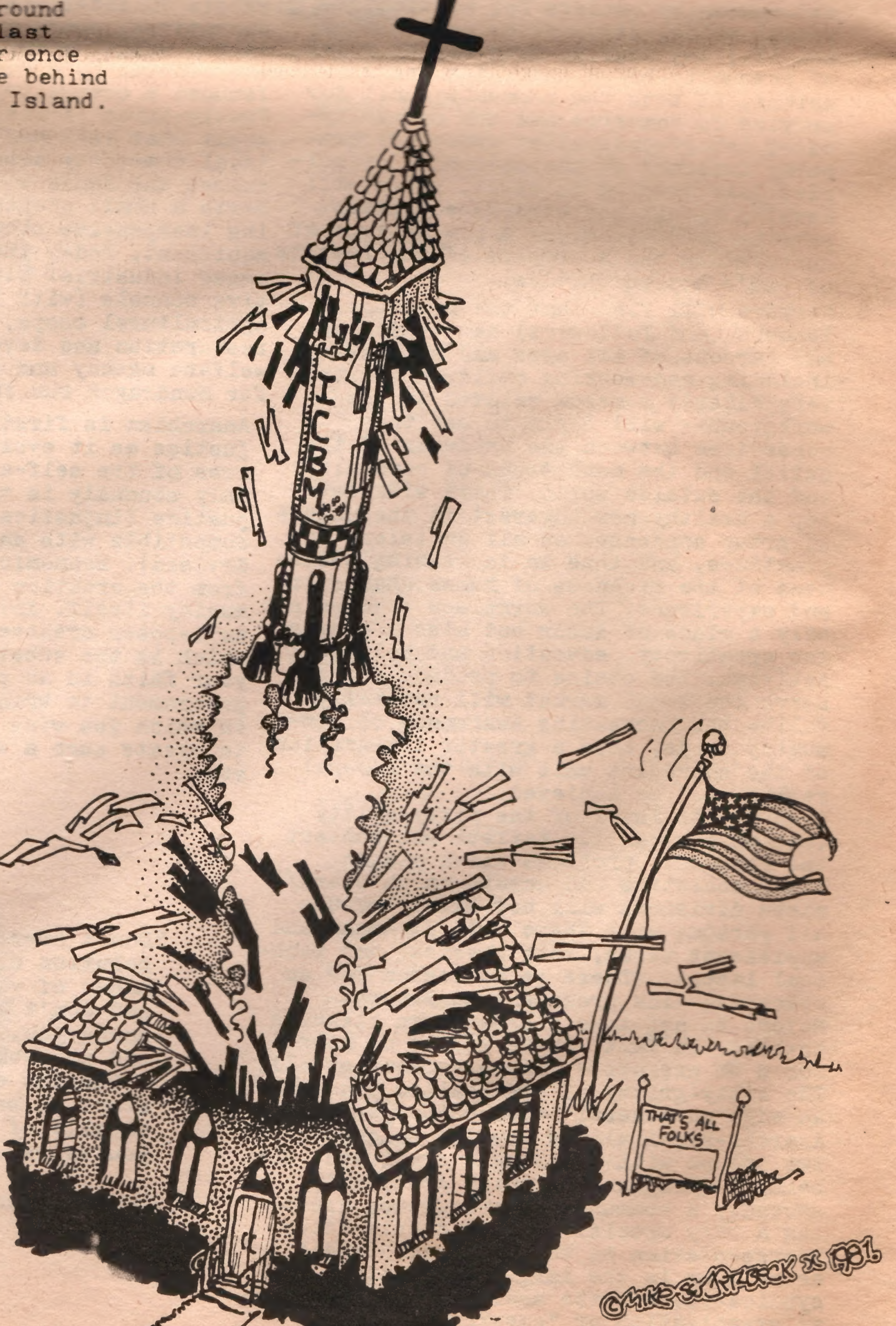
If only the Nukes movement would take off from the ground as it seemed to be doing last Spring. I started a paper once about the media manipulate behind Love Canal and Three Mile Island.

To me it seemed that Love Canal was good practice for Three Mile Island since 3MI fell on the heels of Love Canal. A soft peddle public attitude on the part of concerned responsible parties has successfully deprogrammed enthusiasm for no nukes and pukicides in the ground. Fear most likely plays a large part in individual response to the nuclear issue. As John Lennon has been quoted as saying about the Seventies: "There are no more leaders."

As we anarchists would beg to clarify: " We don't need any leaders anymore!" At least not the kind we've had to put up with. Heroes of the Sixties whom we've seen murdered most probably can account for the neonihilistic attitude of the Seventies. Men like Barry Commoner and women like Barbara Jordan, at least at some points, and Elizabeth Holtzman, can be my leaders or mentors or whatever, any day. They make good COMMON SENSE and I hope Commoner runs again for President because I would like to help him succeed. Abbie Hoffman likes him. I think our system can work if WE MAKE IT WORK, stop complaining how Big Money rows the boat and GET BUSY DOING SOMETHING constructive to use the tools we have at hand. No nukers have set up the groundwork in scores of places already. Ah, make the domino theory work for PEACE. Run for local office, every one. If you don't win, at least you've spread the word a little further.

Love and peace,
Eleanor Sheinbaum


LAUNCH
GOP
Ye must be BORN AGAIN!
©MIKE SZARTZBECK 1981.



THE ONLY CRIME IS TO CONTINUE LIVING AS WE DO

Does it come as news that the political medicine show is attracting fewer and fewer suckers?

As noted in the San Francisco Chronicle (1/2/80), of the 75 million Americans who reached voting age since 1960, about 50 million have not registered to vote. And the numbers of registered voters who bother to go to the polls declines each election.

The popular explanation for "electoral abstinence" is the political disillusionment brought on by Vietnam, Watergate and the lack-luster presidential candidates that plague us. As explanations for the mass non-movement to the polls however these seem presumptuous from the beginning. This disenchantment due to scandals and blandness (not to mention, dullness) presupposes its opposite, and only exceptional circumstances could combine to nurture that faith in the political process today: a certain committed isolationism from the realities of daily life: a suspended animation provided by heavy doses of T.V., Little League and the Junior Chamber of Commerce.

Always a fact or two of importance manages to wiggle out of the confused convergence of half-baked speculations and gossip that constitutes the meat of contemporary journalism. In this case its the discovery, after a number of interviews with non-voters, that the widely accepted "malaise theory" is wrong. To quote from the article:

> Many do not single out Watergate or Vietnam as "disillusioning." In fact, they tend to feel they never had any illusions, that they are simply dealing with reality.

The reality is that politics is a more boring version of the old Roman circus. To participate is to be fooled, to play the puppet, to submit, finally, to a gross embarrassment of one's utter powerlessness in their political arena.

Another discovery brought to the light of day by this article is that the younger generation doesn't hold a patent on these views.

> Among all age groups, voting has declined and cynicism toward politics has risen. Indeed, the oldest age groups express more of a sense of powerlessness or disillusionment than the young adults

If the older generation tends to keep voting despite their misgivings, from habit, that leaves the politicians with little hope for those who have acquired precisely the opposite habit.

Now these facts are truly startling. If tens of millions of people aren't voting because they see the electoral process as a shuck, as another tool to enforce obedience, we have before us a devastating indictment of the parliamentary system as it has been molded in this country. Maybe we can't go so far as to say that we have here a repudiation of democracy, that is, popular government *per se*, but who will say that the Constitution and the institutions that flow from it, that is mainly representative government, are accepted without question? No wonder that as non-voters advance in age and remain 'politically virgin,' as this article mentions, they become the source of increasing anxiety among those who wish to safeguard this system of exploitation.

If we couple these revelations with the fact that *we* non-voters are the very same people who have let our subscriptions to the Work Ethic lapse we can understand the frantic efforts of social researchers to devise schemes of integration to increase participation not only in political institutions but more importantly in the economic sphere where rising labor productivity, owners and union leaders agree, offers the only acceptable solution to their economic woes.

There is no issue that evokes a response that crosses ideological barriers as smoothly as the one of non-participation. We expect the Readers' Digest set to bluster when traditional values are subverted, but what is the difference between them and revolutionary vanguardists who see behind the lack of motivation a certain decadence? Authoritarianism, of the Right and the Left presupposes a conformist morality that neatly characterizes rebellion as an indulgence unless its organized according to correct principles—their principles.

Moving beyond those who wear their blinders to bed we come to those who espouse the electoral process as the only alternative to chaos or dictatorship. Well aware that the centers of power successfully manipulate the major parties, these moles nonetheless believe in the system as an educational tool that will awaken the populace to a better world. This is the argument especially of the evangelist left and its paternalism and incoherence in this regard explain its political inconsequence.

If anything, these little educational campaigns manage to educate mainly the politicians to the latest style of reformism to adopt. Nothing has changed since Roosevelt stole huge portions of Norman Thomas' program. F.D.R. learned that from Bismarck, but what has the Left learned?

It still clings to the belief that electoral exhuberance accelerates social upheavals when history proves that just the contrary is true. Whenever you want to mark the decline of a period of volatile confrontation look for the broad appeal to "take the issues to the polls."

In the early 30's the unemployed were unorganized for electoral campaigns but they were highly responsive to outrages in their communities. By using tactics of immediate confrontation to threaten the law-makers with the prospect of wide-spread civil disorders they forced implementation of federally financed social welfare programs where before there were only inadequate and demeaning private charities. Though the unemployed were hardly pressing for revolutionary upheaval the fact that they could exercise sufficient power to push through a significant social program didn't go unnoticed amongst the politicians.

Later in that decade another movement began to take shape that drew upon the direct action experience of the unemployed and took it a step further. I'm refering to the men and women who quite spontaneously began to use the tactic of factory sit-ins to gain their demands. Leftists have re-written the history of this fight as one of simply building unions, when in fact the workers demanded what amounted to *control over production*.

Needless to say workers' control was not on the agenda of the conniving union organizers who stepped in to derail the movement and negotiate a false victory for the workers: union recognition—another worthless enfranchisement that assured future defeats over the control of working conditions.

In the 60's the greatest changes in the welfare system—extended coverage and increased benefits came from those who again took to confrontation in welfare offices and in the streets. However as soon as a leadership amongst the poor could be assembled and suckered into electoral politics, Washington-style, all the pressure dispersed and local bureaucrats retrenched, cutting programs re-establishing old obstacles to obtain benefits and generally negating all the concessions that the poor had won by their "un-democratic" activity.

These days we don't need the National Inquirer to inform us of the resuscitation of electoral politics. This season the neanderthals in the splinter marxist parties will have to share their puny oppositional role with two flashy new parties, the Libertarians and the Citizens Party. And in a few years no one will be surprised to see added to this moldy political stew an assortment of megalomaniacal turnips in search of a garden to lead.

We can also expect that desperate electoral revivalism will fill the pages of tomorrows newspapers at the expense of the real movement, the new movement, beginning to take shape. A movement not of good citizens meekly registering to cast their ballots for fools, but a movement that develops spontaneous, direct action to gain its ends. A movement that will, when necessary, confront, wildcat, riot and loot. A movement that will be characterized as criminal in a world where the only crime is to continue to live as we do.

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March 15, 1980
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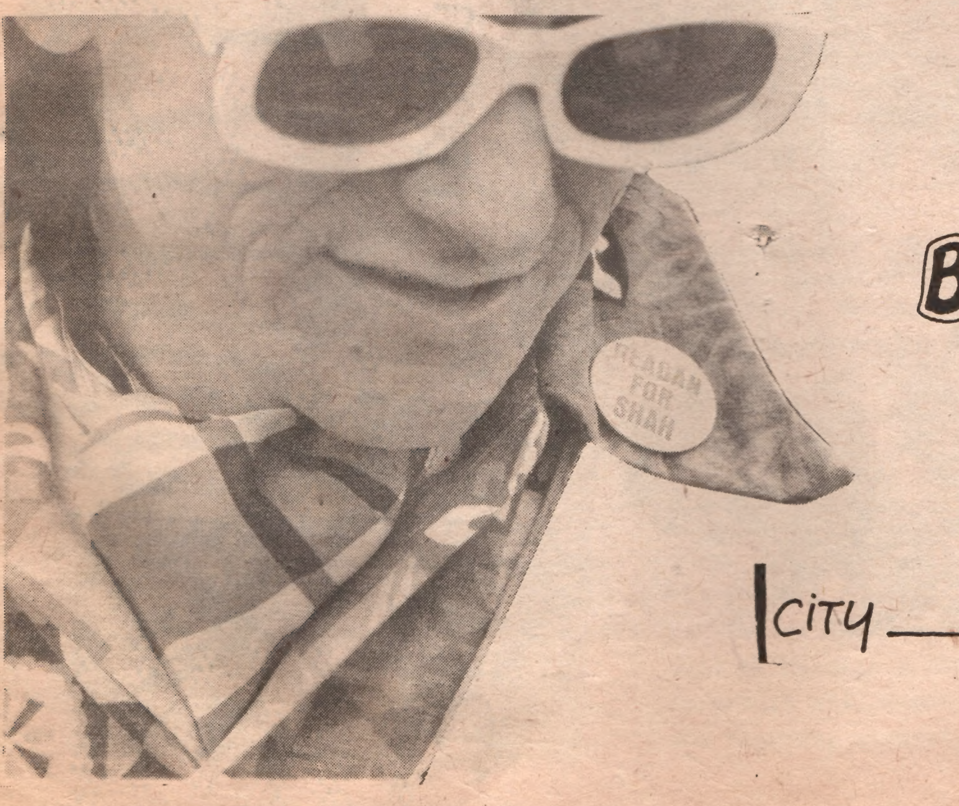

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